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Inventory
for

Manuscript Collection
MS-474

Captain Sidney P. Hunt Letters

Inclusive dates 1871-1874
Bulk 1871-1874

by
Nathan R. Lipfert

November 2017

One Folder
Accession # 2006.087.01

A PART OF THE CAPTAIN W. J. LEWIS PARKER BEQUEST

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Abstract

Hunt, Sidney P., *Captain* (18-1)
Letters, 1871-1874, bulk 1871-1874
One folder
Master mariner of Rockland, ME.
Collection comprised entirely of eight letters from Sidney P. Hunt to his father, John W. Hunt in Rockland, ME.
Bequeathed by Capt. W. J. Lewis Parker in 2006.
MS-474; Accession # 2006.087.01
Finding aid in repository; folder level control.

Added entries—people
Hunt, John W.
Hunt, Sidney P.

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels)
Daniel Williams (Schooner)
John W. Hunt (Half-brig)

Added entries—places
Falmouth (ENG)
Londonderry (ENG)
Margate (ENG)
New Orleans (LA)
New York
Philadelphia (PA)
Rockland (ME)

Added entries—key terms
Brigs

Acquisition

These letters of Captain Sidney P. Hunt were bequeathed to Maine Maritime Museum from the estate of Capt. W. J. Lewis Parker in November and December 2006.

Provenance

Capt. Parker was an extremely knowledgeable collector and an expert on North American schooners. He picked up many parts of his collection of maritime papers by purchase from dealers, auctions, or estate sales, and by gifts from relatives of maritime figures. It is not known where he obtained the Capt. Hunt letters. These papers were found in Captain Parker's study with

other similar items, and were part of his maritime library which he bequeathed to Maine Maritime Museum.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of these materials for study or research. Researchers should seek permission to obtain copies, and for publication of any sort.

Physical Condition

These letters have the usual minor tears and dirt of 19th-century documents. Overall, the Captain Hunt letters are in very good condition.

Biographical/Historical Notes

Sidney P. Hunt was born in Rockland, ME, 28 October 1839. His father, John W. Hunt, was a lime manufacturer there; his mother was Rachel Hunt. In the 1860 census Sidney was 21, employed as a sailor, single, and living with his parents and siblings. By October 1864, he was in command of the Rockland schooner *Daniel Williams,* taking over from his brother-in-law Captain Joseph Thorndike (see MS-475). In the 1870 census, he was still single and living with his parents, but his occupation was "Ship master." According to the Waldoboro Registers and Enrollments, he was already in command of the half-brig *John W. Hunt* by that time. He married Isabella Sleeper on 21 November 1872, and they had a son Alfred Percival Hunt, born at Bangor 3 May, 1877. The half-brig sailed from Boston on 7 January 1878 bound for Kingston (prob. Jamaica), and "was never heard from," according to probate records. Isabella Hunt was appointed administratrix of his estate. His death date is given as probably 11 January 1878.

The *John W. Hunt* was a half-brig or brigantine built at Rockland in 1869 by Calvin C. Ingraham, master builder L. G. Hall. She measured 435 gross tons, register length 121.7 feet, draft 15 feet. She was a full-modeled vessel with two decks, a billet head, and a square stern. Initially enrolled, in 1870 she was registered for foreign voyages. Captain Hunt, son of the lime manufacturer for whom the vessel was named, was in command nearly throughout her career. Sidney Hunt and John Hunt each owned 3/32nds of the vessel, initially. On 16 January 1878, she was sighted on her beam ends southwest of South Shoals from a storm on January 11; a total loss. This description is drawn from the Waldoboro Registers and Enrollments (MS-135), *American Lloyds*, and *The Main Beam* (p. 136).

Scope and Content Notes

Collection is comprised of eight letters (one with envelope) from Captain Sidney P. Hunt to his father, John W. Hunt, in Rockland, ME. The letters originate from various British and East Coast American ports, indicating participation in transatlantic trade. All the letters appear to have been written while Captain Hunt was in command of the brig *John W. Hunt*, of which the two men were shareholders. The letters contain a mixture of vessel business, travelogue, and family chit-chat. The son asks his father to see to various bits of his personal business back in Maine. There is mention of the Chicago fire driving some insurance companies out of business, repairs to the brig, and a visit to Blarney Castle. One letter mentions sending some personal items home from Philadelphia in the Rockland schooner *Daniel Williams,* which Captain Hunt had commanded back in the 1860s.